



**12th Annual**

*Women's*  
Achievement & Student Essay Awards

**MARCH 29, 2007**

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THE UTAH COMMISSION FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES  
PRESENTS THE  
12TH ANNUAL  
WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT ESSAY AWARDS

**MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

CAROLE MIKITA (BIO PAGE 15)

**ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS**

DOROTHY DART (BIO PAGE 3)

MARIA GARCIAZ (BIO PAGE 4)

CARLA KELLEY (BIO PAGE 5)

TRACY B. JOHNSON (BIO PAGE 7)

PAMELA RUSSELL (BIO PAGE 8)

**POSTHUMOUS AWARD**

DIAN WOODHOUSE (BIO PAGE 9)

**STUDENT ESSAY AWARDS**

KELLI JO AMADOR (ESSAY PAGE 10)

KENDRA FRANCIS (ESSAY PAGE 12)

**"MARY AND 'LISBETH: A TWO PERSON READING"**

BY DIAN WOODHOUSE (PAGE 14)

## ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



Utah has more than 2,000 children in foster care at any given time. Of these, about 160 transition out of the system each year after their 18th birthday or after graduating from high school. Studies show that these children are at risk of becoming homeless or incarcerated—in large part because of a lack of interested adults.

There are several state and non-profit agencies that provide resources and services for these children—but no program can provide an adult who cares simply because they want to. Utah Supreme Court Chief Justice Christine M. Durham challenged all Utahans to help our foster children succeed in her 2005 State of the Judiciary presentation.

Dorothy Dart is exactly the sort of person to whom Chief Justice Durham was making her plea: an energetic, organized woman with the ability to make things happen.

Dorothy was raised in Copperton, Utah, and graduated from the University of Utah in Communication. After raising three children she began her first career with the Governors Committee for Executive Reorganization under Governor Scott Matheson. In this position she worked to make state government function more efficiently. Later, her career ranged from private consulting, to working with the Utah Medical Association, to Program Advisor for the Genetics Science Learning Center (a web-based education program) at the University of Utah.

When Dorothy heard the call to help foster children, she worked with friends from the First Presbyterian Church of Salt Lake City and asked them to support the creation of a pilot program that would match foster youth in the valley with a mentor. She connected with Katie Gregory from the Juvenile Court System, Ken Hull at Utah Child and Family Services and other community mentoring programs to provide information, training, and resources to her team of ten.

In less than five months, Dorothy developed the pilot program, completed background checks on all mentors and with the support of Ken Hull and his team of caseworkers matched youth with mentors. Through one-on-one interaction, activities and group support the youth have been encouraged to access opportunities for education and personal development.



The youth were asked what name they thought would best represent them other than “foster child.” The group decided to call each other “friends” because that was their hope—to be friends. Their friendship is highly valued because as one foster friend said, “they listen to me not because they are paid to, but because they want to and that makes all the difference.”

It may seem like an easy job to listen to kids but it can be overwhelming. The goal is not to rescue our young friends but to support them as they develop into the people they would like to become. To do this, mentors must actively listen without immediately giving advice and expressing opinions. Instead, mentors are encouraged to ask thoughtful questions that allow their friends to explore their feelings and come to their own conclusions.

Dorothy realizes that life challenges and the destructive behaviors these young people face are best handled when someone cares. Dorothy truly cares. She is making the future a better place by making the present a supportive place to grow up.



Maria Garciaz is a native of Utah, born and raised in Salt Lake City. She has been the Executive Director of Salt Lake Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc., since 1990.

Maria began her career in grassroots community organizing 30 years ago, initially working with youth. As a young woman she worked to create access to higher education for minority youth as a counselor at East High School. She then worked as a Youth Probation Officer helping young people exit from the youth corrections system. In 1982, Maria began volunteering her time to help create the exemplary Youth Works Program. Formally the Westside Youth Project, this program serves high risk-youth in community based pre-employment drug and alcohol training. Four years later she became the director of the program.

While in the position of Youth Works Director, Maria specifically addressed the needs of young people, recruiting and hiring youth ages 14-18, training them in social and work skills development and providing them with opportunities to apply their newfound skills. Youth from throughout Salt Lake County in the program found themselves gaining real life experiences in the construction work industry. Through these hands on applications young men and women in the program were able to overcome life challenges, destructive behavior, gang involvement, and substance abuse, as well as avoiding teen pregnancy. To date over 1,650 young men and women have benefited from Maria's dedication.

To celebrate the positive steps their lives have taken, 500 alumni of Salt Lake Neighborhood Housing Services Youth Works program gathered for a banquet in their honor in September of 1994. Internationally known journalist Bill Moyers was on hand to witness the event and film a panel discussion with several of the alumni. Eighteen-year-old Pam Pea told her story of success—after entering the program and becoming a project assistant she went into higher education. Pam highlighted Maria Garciaz who helped her turn her life around by saying, “Thanks for refusing to let me live in the gutter.” This was more than ten years ago, and many more young men and women have thanked Maria for being an example of how to maintain confidence and compassion in order to be successful in our community.

Today, Maria manages the growth and expansion of an organization that works toward total community revitalization through affordable housing and economic development on the west side of Salt Lake. Her heart still remains true to the concept of getting youth involved in the community and allowing them to be a part of the process.

When it comes to women who have helped shape and influence positive lifestyles and thriving communities through hard work, dedication and high integrity, Maria is one of those women. Maria is a role model for young women and men as she combats poverty through her talent of forging partnerships and bringing stakeholders and investors to the table. She has received many awards for Community and Youth leadership development including the Special Recognition Award from the Utah State Troubled Youth Conference in 1989. She is also a member of the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice.



Carla Kelley is a human rights activist, educator, diversity trainer, mother, grandmother and foster parent who teaches the importance of developing respect for all humanity and has done amazing things on behalf of disadvantaged youth. Carla’s work has grown in relation to her keen awareness of the needs of our children and the community they live in and the lack of services needed to support them. She says, “We must model and teach respect to our youth, as our hope for tomorrow relies on it.”

After many years of caring for her family and owning and operating a catering business, Carla returned to school. She attended the University of Utah for three years and then received a scholarship to the California Institute of Integral Learning in San Francisco to complete her degree. In 1998 she

graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Integral Studies. These studies teach the importance of a more unifying vision of our world.

Carla believes in the importance of compassion, and knows that one person can make a difference—and that difference can multiply and change the fate of others. Carla goes above and beyond in serving others. She constantly asks “how?” and “why?” while expanding the limits of conventional thought. Her work has provided support and care in a variety of settings from elementary schools, to correctional institutions, to faith based organizations and foster families.

After serving two years in AmeriCorps as a diversity educator she founded the Human Rights Education Center of Utah. The primary focus of the Human Rights Center is to teach anti-bias, nonviolence, anti-bullying and human rights education to youth and their leaders. The mission of the Human Rights Center is: *Advancing equality in Utah through education, advocacy and dialogue.*

Carla has been teaching Human Rights classes at City Academy since 2000. Her curriculum focuses on identifying the causes and effects of biases and prejudice in our world. In 2004 she worked with students to produce the play “Bang Bang You’re Dead”, a production for teenage actors that addresses violence in schools. An important part of what Carla did with that play came after the performance each night when the lights went up, student actors came out and sat on the front of the stage, and these students led discussions with the audience about real issues of bullying behavior and teenage violence. Audience members were moved by this experience and were able to gain new insights into the causes and prevention of these types of destructive behavior.

Carla has researched and developed a school policy template and two-year anti-bullying program curriculum for the State Board of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools. She also helped create a resolution asking Utah Schools to create anti-bullying policies and education in an effort to reduce school violence and increase the students feeling of safety. The resolution passed unanimously by the Utah State Legislature in February, 2006. Carla was recommended by the Utah State Board of Education as a qualified anti-bullying educator.

Carla has changed the lives of others and made our world safer, more knowledgeable and kinder through her efforts at the Human Rights Education Center of Utah, and the exemplary way she lives her life.



Tracy Johnson is the Executive Director of New Frontiers for Families, a non-profit organization that supports families and children. New Frontiers for Families was created in 1998 to offer practical support and resources for parents, children and individuals who have complex needs. New Frontiers for Families has thirty employees, and most are parents of children with behavioral health challenges. Tracy has worked very hard, mostly as a volunteer, and has contributed countless hours to assist families and children in Washington, Iron, Kane, Beaver and Garfield Counties. Tracy believes all families and individuals have strengths and that we should build on those strengths.

Tracy has assisted families and youth by attending individual education planning sessions, and linking eligible families to Medicaid, Social Security and Vocational Rehabilitation. She is an active member of the county's Local Interagency Council to help facilitate collaboration and supportive services. She has become an expert about the available resources in all five communities, and she is successful in encouraging youth and families to utilize these services. She is a dedicated fundraiser and has secured funding to send parents to conferences both in state and nationally.

Tracy developed a professional partnership with local Native American children and their families in the Cedar City area. Tracy helps these families succeed at home, school, and within their community by creating services and support systems to build self-respect and understanding of their role in the sacred circle of the family unit. The impact of this partnership has proven to be a powerful model that can be replicated.

Tracy created "The Beauty Way Around Children," a project which provided Native American youth support in the public school system and developed a strong Title VII program in the Garfield County School District. Youth involved in this program improved their academic scores, school attendance, and activity attendance. It also enhanced their cultural awareness: Native American speakers educated the youth about successful Native Americans in the state and country.

Tracy was instrumental in starting the first annual Red-Rock Pow-Wow. Activities included drumming classes, dancing, history fair, youth leadership skills, self-acceptance and self-esteem workshops, and traditional values and lessons of the medicine wheel for Native American youth.

Tracy currently works with Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health UT CAN Project and with Utah's Partnership for Youth-in-Transition

Project, RECONNECT. She also works on the boards of the Daniels Fund Project, "The Beauty Way Project" and the Five County Association of Governments.

Tracy has received many awards; her most recent was the Community Service Award at the 2006 Links for Families Conference. The families she served selected Tracy for this award. She spends numerous hours volunteering within her church working with the young women and travels throughout the Garfield County area, working with the youth.

Tracy's co-workers have described her as committed to the cause of improving both professional and community resources to children and families. She has the courage to speak out and give voice to sensitive issues. She is a staunch supporter of promoting change in the way that services are delivered to families. Tracy is a visionary who relentlessly pursues her ideals in support of improving systems of care.

*Pamela Russell*

NOMINATED BY RICHARD J. ANDERSON AND PATTI VAN WAGONER



Pamela Russell has made significant contributions to young women whose lives have been impacted by placement in foster care. Youth in foster care face many challenges. Some come into foster care as a result of neglect or abuse in their own family and others may come into foster care due to acts that put them at risk of causing harm to themselves through self-destructive behaviors, such as committing offenses, substance abuse, and other delinquent behaviors.

Through the Transition to Adult Living Initiative, Pam has contributed her skills as a leader in transforming the way youth in foster care are involved in making decisions regarding their lives.

She has established the Transition to Adult Living Youth Action Committee, a statewide coalition that brings youth representatives together with community partners to improve the resources that are available to them as they move into adult life and prepare to leave foster care. She has developed and implemented practice guidelines to be used by professionals and volunteers working with the young women. She has provided training that has taught child welfare caseworkers how to work with youth, focusing on life goals that will help them attain the knowledge, skills, and resources that can help them become successful young adults. These goals include: supportive and enduring relationships, a positive sense of self, educational attainment and employment, health care access, and safe, stable and affordable housing.



Pam has planned annual youth summits that include two days of workshops and training. The last summit included 110 youth participants. She has also been involved in regional youth councils with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) that has provided many opportunities for young women to gain planning and leadership skills. These efforts have empowered youth to be in charge of their own lives, and facilitate their own child and family team processes for planning for their future. Pam has also helped young women to have opportunities to be involved in national conferences, to give them a larger picture of life experience and to build their confidence.

Pam empowers young women to make choices while in foster care; shifting the control over youth in foster care to a balance where youth have opportunities to experience normal adolescent life experiences (driver's license, school activities, proms, etc.). She has enhanced treatment providers' understanding of the significance of youth remaining connected to families.

Pam initiated a special presentation where youth worked on interviewing skills, and writing resumes. This led to a combined effort with DWS to provide a "door opener" event, where more than 30 businesses offered to open their doors to help young women entering training and the workforce.

Young women that are moving from a foster care placement into adult life are now better prepared than they have ever been due to Pam's work. She has been an inspiration not only to the young women but also to the professionals and volunteers that work with them. Better services are now available, more people want to assist the young women, new community businesses are now wanting to offer a path to sufficiency, and improved life outcomes are now in place for hundreds of young women who were previously left so unequipped for their futures.

## **POSTHUMOUS AWARD**



*Dian Woodhouse 1954-2006*

NOMINATED BY THE UTAH COMMISSION FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES

Dian Woodhouse was a Utah writer, actress and community activist. She received a Bachelor of Arts in English and Philosophy from Westminster College before attending the University of Utah, where she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Theatre, Directing and Playwriting.

Dian was involved in theatre for more than 25 years. She wrote, acted in, directed and produced numerous plays, as well as screenplays, short stories,

and poetry pieces. A former winner of the Utah State Fine Arts contest, Dian was also president of the Utah branch of the Screen Actors Guild for six years. Her latest endeavors included civic and arts community activities, writing and producing the play "Mary and Lisbeth" (focusing on the story of a former slave who became a dressmaker to first lady Mary Todd Lincoln), writing a novel, and writing for Weber County Forum. She also wrote copious amounts of poetry, three screenplays (one of which placed near the top of the Nichols Fellowship), position pieces, reviews, news and analyses, children's books, and more. She also read voraciously.

Dian died December 12, 2006 after a heart attack. She was 52.

## ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS



*Kelli Jo Amador*  
GRADE 11 - WEST JORDAN, UTAH

*"A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power  
to create, nurture and transform."*  
-Diane Mariechild

Although all women have extraordinary abilities, there are some whose lives hold a greater impact on their surroundings and lives of others. Emma Smith is one of these women. Emma Smith is most likely known for

her marriage to Joseph Smith; the prophet of the Mormon Church. Emma was born on July 10th in 1804 and died April 30th, 1879. During her 75 years Emma was a mother, a wife, and one of the greatest humanitarians in modern history. Emma Smith's life has created a ripple effect that continues to touch lives profoundly and affect people across the world.

The women that have had an impact on my life all share one common occupation; they are all someone's mother. When I look at Emma Smith, I don't just see someone's wife or just a notable humanitarian. I see her as a mother. During her marriage to Joseph Smith Emma gave birth 7 times. The first three children did not live past infancy, all died at birth or hours after. After her second miscarriage, Emma and Joseph adopted twins whose mother had died in childbirth. Emma received the twins only nine days after her own personal tragedy. The ability to recover emotionally in order to care for and accept the lives of her new twins Joseph and Julia gives me more respect for Emma than when first encountered.

Emma was not only an amazing mother because of her acceptance and love in extending her family. She was also supportive to all her children. In her

later years she traveled with her son Joseph III, to support him in his decision to follow in his father's footsteps. Joseph III's father, Emma's husband died because of what he believed. After losing her husband in such an unjust way, Emma still supported her son despite the danger it entailed.

I know what it's like to have a supportive mother. My own mother has supported myself and my sister through any dreams that come our way. Because of this I know that Emma Smith had an impact on her children's lives just by being there as their mom.

If you live in Utah, the last name of "Smith" is usually associated with the founder and prophet of the Mormon Church, Joseph Smith. Emma was in fact Joseph's first wife, but we should not let all of his accomplishments overshadow hers. Through Emma's dedication and support she helped Joseph translate the Golden plates into The Book of Mormon, a document that has influenced the lives of countless people across the world. Emma is one of the few people who had witnessed the plates under a cloth, noting their metallic sounds, their weight, and their inscriptions by touch. Emma's own beliefs on temperance and tobacco may have affected Joseph's prayer, and eventually "The Word of Wisdom" resulted. The effect that Emma had on her husband branched out to have an effect on the Mormon religion.

In the quote by Diane Marie Child one of the abilities listed is the ability to transform. Emma Smith exceeded herself in this ability when she worked with others to create the Relief Society. The Relief Society was one of the first all women societies devoted to charity and helping others. The society was small at first, but now it has grown to include over 5.2 million women in over 170 countries. Emma's humanitarianism was infectious, and still thrives within modern-day members of the Relief Society. By helping with this society, Emma empowered women for the good of the entire world. The society's motto is "Charity Never Faileth."

My grandmother is a member of this society. She's proud of all that this society has done to help the world. The society has sent care packages to third world countries, ran charities for the less fortunate, and they also aid people in their own communities when they need help. When I was younger the Relief Society made dinner for my family after my mother was on bed rest from surgery. Because of this simple act, I learned that small things matter. This society empowers and mobilizes women across the world to do more for people everywhere.

It's amazing how one life can reach across time to affect the lives of millions of other people. Emma Smith's life planted a seed of humanitarianism that has rippled across the world without her knowledge; but to me she was more than just a humanitarian. Emma Smith was also a wife and a mother. For the time period that she lived in, the accomplishments that she achieved as a woman are miraculous. Emma Smith impacted her community, her family, and ultimately, the world.



*Kendra Francis*

GRADE 9 - HOOPER, UTAH

### *Intercepting Fumbled Values*

"Talent, power, strength and gender."

Wait, what? Gender? Yeah, that question is probably running through your mind right about now. This is exactly what my parents and I were thinking right after we heard the shocking words of the junior high football coach saying "I'm sorry. Maybe, next year." But no, I didn't just stop there. I went on to fight my defense.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was a woman that also didn't take no for an answer.

Elizabeth and I are a lot alike. She is believed to be a driving force behind the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention even though she was not allowed her seat because she was a woman. She also played a leadership role for 50 years in the woman's rights movement, writing many key speeches. Like her, I feel responsible for my own rights and privileges as well as for the girls around me. This all started with my disagreeing with the choice of another, sticking up for what I believe in and not backing down until I was heard.

"I'm better than half the boys on the team," I explained. *I worked harder than anyone*, I thought in my mind as I heard the long sigh from the coach. He sympathized "You know you're a fantastic athlete and you didn't make it because many people tried out for the same position, and had more talent." And that's pretty much when the whole gender topic came up.

I do understand that football was originally a guy sport but this is 2007. I assumed from the beginning that it would be harder for me to make the team than a short-skinny-weak-flimsy-little kid not even trying out. But the biggest surprise came when we were at tryouts and I actually fit in and was considered good, even better, for that matter. And not only was I better but I was different. The boys on the team even accepted me, and some were intimidated that a girl was going to make it and they weren't. When I didn't make it, even the coach was surprised that it meant so much to everyone. Many of the players questioned the coach's judgment, just like I did.

Elizabeth too had experienced a great disappointment because of her gender. Her brother, Eleazar, died in 1826. Elizabeth remembered trying to comfort her father, saying that she would try to be all her brother had been. Her father's response: "Oh, my daughter, I wish you were a boy!"

I am inspired by Elizabeth's words in her famous Declaration of Sentiments speech presented at the first women's rights convention held in 1848 in Seneca Falls:

*"The world has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation, because in the degradation of woman the very fountains of life are poisoned at their source. ... It is the wise mother that has the wise son. So long as your women are slaves you may throw your colleges and churches to the winds."*

I hope to put up a similar fight, whenever I get the chance in my own life. I have resolved to make my voice heard by fighting for what I believe in and not backing down. My experience has helped me to appreciate my own abilities. I am going to continue to be the best that I can be and to show others that nothing is going to hold me back, especially not my gender. I believe that women are more important than most people think. Just like in a fumbled play in football, I hope to intercept this problem.



## **“MARY AND ‘LISBETH: A TWO PERSON READING”**

BY DIAN WOODHOUSE

“Mary and ‘Lisbeth” is the story of Elizabeth Keckley, a former African-American slave, who purchased her freedom through her dressmaking skills, and became a dressmaker to the Washington elite. She became a successful businesswoman and author, and the former first lady’s Mary Todd Lincoln’s best friend and confidante during the civil war.

These two women, one born into slavery and the other born to privilege, became close friends as a result of the seamstress work, which Elizabeth did for Mary Todd Lincoln. The stark contrast between the two women and their personal struggles is compellingly told through the eyes of both characters. Mary and ‘Lisbeth speak to our hearts about the search for happiness, liberation, struggle and triumph, and ultimately about loss, gain, and the human spirit.

### **Rita Martin**

Plays the role of Elizabeth Keckley. She has been one of the dynamic emcees for the Weber State University Gospel Festival for the past three years, and has worked in a number of plays both professionally and for her church.

### **Caril Jennings**

Plays the role of Mary Todd Lincoln. She has been a promoter of readers’ theatre at Weber State University for several years, including annual productions in conjunction with the Weber State University Greek Festival.



## **CAROLE MIKITA**

### **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

Carole Mikita has been a part of KSL Television since June of 1979. She co-anchors "Eyewitness News at 6:30" and is also the station's Arts and Religion reporter. Since the fall of 1998, Carole has written and produced documentaries that air during LDS General Conference every six months. Carole received a 1998 Regional Emmy Award for the feature "Gideon's Story."

Carole speaks to and participates in a number of community and church organizations. Because of her dedication to people with disabilities, the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation honored her in 1994; and in 1996, the Assistance League of Utah named her a "Woman of Distinction." In 2000, she received the Legacy Award from the Utah-California Women's Association. She has also hosted the Primary Children's Medical Center Telethon for more than 20 years.

Carole grew up in Steubenville, Ohio, and attended Ohio State University where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theater. She is married to Neil York, Chairman of the History Department at BYU. They have two daughters, Jennifer and Caitlin.



*Congratulations*

**TO ALL AWARD  
RECIPIENTS!**

## THE UTAH COMMISSION FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES

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